

HOW WELL DO I UNDERSTAND MY COMMUNITY?

(Community Assessment)

Before embarking on your program, it is important to conduct a sound assessment of your community so that you will ensure your program achieves its objectives. This assessment will provide you with data to develop community-specific materials to supplement the *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air* creative pieces and messages provided in this toolkit.

Many of the techniques described in the following sections were undertaken to develop the messages and materials in support of *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air*, as summarized in the research sections of this toolkit (Tabs C and M). Research techniques such as analysis of quantitative market research, focus group interviews, and consultation with experts were employed to develop both the content and tone of the print and broadcast ads. Similarly, extensive audience analysis was conducted in the original pilot site locations.

Transportation and Air Quality Data

The more information you have about an issue, the better prepared you will be to plan an effective communications program. Begin by reviewing existing data in your community on transportation, traffic congestion, and air pollution. Find information on your air-quality-standard attainment status; the extent of your traffic congestion; the major sources of air pollution to which individuals' actions contribute (e.g., doing errands at peak drive times in poorly maintained vehicles) and their subsequent effects on individuals and the community; solutions or preventive measures; laws and statutes related to these issues, and other relevant information. The "Transportation and Air Quality Facts" section of this toolkit contains a variety of statistics that illustrate the problem of air pollution and traffic congestion. You can supplement these with data specific to your community, from a number of sources, such as those described below and listed in the Audience Analysis Chart in this section.

Gauging Community Awareness, Attitudes, and Behaviors

In addition to reviewing local transportation and air-quality related data, you need to know what citizens in your community think about these issues, their perception of your area's air pollution and traffic congestion, their thoughts on taking steps to address these problems, etc. By asking your target audience(s) specific questions, you can focus and streamline the information you need.

The Audience Analysis Chart in this section includes key questions and possible sources of information about your target audience(s). Use the information you collect to lay the foundation for your strategic communications plan, which is described in the next section of this toolkit.

Many of the answers to the questions posed in the chart are available from resources such as libraries, organizations, and experts in your community. Possible data sources and assessment methods include:

- X Consultation with experts on transportation and air quality. They can refer you to existing data and articles as well as other experts. Contact national resources, such as the web

sites of the Environmental Protection Agency (<http://www.epa.gov>) and the Department of Transportation (<http://www.dot.gov>) to access a wide variety of resources, including bibliographies, resource books, articles, and experts. Meet with or call key experts in your community to determine the availability of local data. You may be able to access many of these people through your local coalition.

- X Review local, state, and national **knowledge, attitude, and behavior (KAB)** survey results. These surveys, conducted among a fairly large sample of people, provide very reliable data to help you choose what to emphasize, as well as a measurable baseline to use in evaluating your program. Typically, the surveys measure many of the factors influencing behavior, such as knowledge of an issue, attitudes, skills, and perceived social norms. Your state DOT or local transportation or environmental organizations may have already gathered this information. If such a survey does not exist, explore options for conducting your own KAB survey or adding relevant questions to existing surveys. A second survey using the same questions should then be conducted at the end of the program. Comparing the two sets of results can help you decide whether the public's attitudes, awareness levels and reported behaviors changed. See the "Evaluation" section of this toolkit for additional information on this topic.
- X Conduct a literature review using the library, the Internet, or a Nexis search for relevant published articles, studies, and census data on your target audience(s).
- X Conduct focus groups with your target audience(s) to determine attitudes about an issue. Focus groups involve relatively few people and allow much more flexibility in asking questions than a survey. They are often a good complement to KAB surveys, which tell you what people think and do, but not why. The results of focus groups, however, cannot be generalized to an entire community because the participants are not representative of the population as a whole.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are small group discussions of approximately seven to nine people in which a moderator, using a prepared outline, leads the participants through a series of questions about a given topic, with the flexibility to explore feelings and attitudes. Focus group participants are encouraged to be honest and open about their comments and responses. The focus group process allows in-depth probing of the target audience's knowledge, awareness levels, ideas on particular issues, motivation, as well as their perceptions of and responses to specific materials. Properly used, focus groups can serve as a good source of general information and ideas, although they will not provide the statistically reliable data gleaned from surveys. This is true for two reasons: focus group participants are usually chosen because they have something in common (rather than randomly, as in surveys), and the questions may vary (rather than the same questions being asked in the same way of everyone, as in surveys).

As described in the "Initiative Overview" section of this toolkit, focus groups were initially conducted for the *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air* initiative to obtain critical information on the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of the general driving public. Additional groups were

convened to test potential program concepts and messages before creative materials were produced.

A market research firm can help you to plan and conduct focus group testing by providing services such as recruiting participants, providing a moderator, conducting the groups, and preparing a final summary report. This section of the toolkit contains a sample focus group participant recruitment screener, moderator=s guide, and focus group participant information sheet to help you understand the tools a research firm typically develops and to assist you in overseeing the focus group process. The screener is used to determine if potential participants meet the criteria of your target audience(s). The moderator=s guide is a prepared outline used to steer the discussion. The participant information sheet is filled out at the end of the focus group by each person and is used to obtain additional factual details. While participants are filling in the information, the moderator can check with you to see if any additional questions need to be asked. Participants are normally provided with refreshments and a small monetary compensation, which your market research firm helps you determine, based on your geographic area and the issue you are examining.

To locate a firm to conduct your focus groups, call a local chapter of a national public relations, advertising, or communications association (e.g., American Association of Public Opinion Research, Marketing Research Association, Public Relations Society of America, and American Association of Advertising Agencies). You could also look for directories of such firms at the library and in your phone book’s yellow pages under “market research.”

Note: Surveys and focus groups require an array of skills and should be conducted by trained professionals. If your organization has access to a market research firm and the budget to conduct proper focus groups using trained moderators, please read the “Evaluation” section of this toolkit and visit www.italladdsup.gov to get questions that have been carefully researched and designed to gather information that is aligned with the *It All Adds Up* objectives of increasing awareness and knowledge of transportation choices that contribute to cleaner air. For your convenience, the questions are available in multiple formats (telephone survey, mail survey, shopping mall “intercept” survey, web-site survey, and for administration to a focus group.) If you do not have access to trained market research expertise, we strongly suggest that you rely on existing research, such as that summarized in the “Research: *It All Adds Up* Initiative Design and Target Audience” section of this toolkit, rather than attempt to conduct your own focus group interviews.

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS CHART

To help guide the information-gathering process, provided below is a set of key questions along with possible data sources. Please especially note the research results from extensive focus group testing of *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air* at www.italladdsup.gov.

| KEY QUESTIONS | POSSIBLE DATA SOURCES |
|---|---|
| What is the issue? | X Local statistics on air pollution and traffic congestion X Local universities and University of South Florida (www2.eng.usf.edu/main.asp), Texas Transportation Institute, (tti.tamu.edu), and Georgia Institute of Technology (www.gatech.edu) |
| What is the demographic distribution of individuals affected by this issue (e.g., age, sex, economic level)? | X Census Bureau data, www.census.gov X State transportation and air quality management data |
| Who is the target audience(s) and what is its size(s)? | X Census Bureau data X State transportation and air quality management data |
| Is your target audience(s) aware of the issue? | X KAB surveys X Focus groups X Consultation w/experts X Literature review X Internet |
| Does your target audience(s) have the necessary facts about the issue? Does your target audience(s) know how to prevent or respond to the issue? | X KAB surveys X Focus groups X Literature review X Consultation w/experts |
| Does your target audience(s) believe they are contributing to the problem? | X KAB surveys X Focus groups |
| Does your target audience(s) recognize the benefits of changing their actions? | X KAB surveys X Literature review X Focus groups |
| Does your target audience(s) feel they will receive positive social support if they adapt the new actions? Do social norms support or undermine change? | X KAB surveys X Focus groups X Literature review |
| Can these actions be performed? Are they realistic? | X KAB surveys X Focus groups |
| What are the misperceptions among your target audience(s) re: the link between transportation and air quality? | X KAB surveys X Focus groups X Literature review |

| | |
|---|---|
| Does the target audience have the knowledge/skills to perform the desired action? | X KAB surveys X Literature review X Focus groups |
| Are needed services and materials available and accessible to your target audience(s)? | X Audit of community services and materials |
| Are there any barriers to change? What kind of transportation options are available to the community? | X Consultation w/experts X Focus groups X KAB surveys |
| Are individuals starting to change? What are the trends? | X KAB surveys X Local statistics on use of alternative modes of transportation, changes in air quality over time, etc. |
| What individuals or groups influence the target audience(s)= actions? | X Consultation w/experts X Literature review X KAB surveys X Focus groups |

Identify Channels for Reaching Your Target Audience(s)

To successfully reach your target audience(s), it is important to identify the most popular and credible communications channels among each group. Channels may include the media; materials such as advertisements or brochures; and interpersonal communications, such as with community leaders and service providers. Key questions for identifying the best communications channels, along with possible data sources, are described in the following chart:

| KEY QUESTIONS | POSSIBLE DATA SOURCES |
|--|--|
| What are the most popular communications channels among your target audience(s) (e.g., number of hours per day spent with television, radio, print)? | X Commercial data, such as Nielsen and Arbitron X Media trade associations X Focus groups X Surveys |
| What are the most popular radio stations, television programs, and viewing and listening times among your target audience(s)? | X Commercial data X Audit of television outlets X Local advertising/public relations agencies X Audit of radio stations |
| What are the most popular print publications among your target audience(s)? | X Commercial data X Local advertising/public relations agencies X Audit of publications and circulation |
| Is there billboard or transit advertising in your community? Number of and reach of locations? | X Audit of local companies who own or manage use of space |
| Which movie theaters/live theaters are most popular? Are there opportunities to place PSAs/paid ads? | X Assessment of popularity and geographic location |

| | |
|--|--|
| | X Contact local theaters |
| How popular are rental videotapes among your target audience(s)? Do video rental stores or libraries provide public service programs for free? | X Commercial data X Data from video rental companies X Literature reviews |
| What is the geographic distribution of media coverage? Does it reach all of your target audience(s)? | X Media directories, which may be found at a local library or through a local public relations agency, that provides lists and descriptions of media outlets |
| Are local television, radio, or print outlets looking for programming, PSAs/paid ads, or story ideas? | X Audit of media outlets X Consult w/experts |
| How popular are different formats with your target audience(s) (e.g., talk shows, news, entertainment)? | X Commercial data X Focus groups |
| Are there any restrictions in place by media outlets regarding placement of PSAs/paid ads or programming content? | X Consultation w/experts X Audit of media outlets |
| Where does your target audience(s) seek services regarding transportation/air quality? | X State and local transportation & air quality management agencies X Consult w/colleagues |

Choose the questions that will help you gather the most relevant information about your target audience(s). Some of the most common data sources include commercial media habit surveys sponsored by Nielsen and Arbitron, which you may access through local public relations and advertising agencies. Also, consult with media trade associations, such as the American Association of Advertising Agencies or your local Advertising Club, which may provide free, general data on your target audience=s media habits. Consider directly contacting media outlets in your community to obtain answers to some of the questions contained in the chart. They can provide you with ratings information and valuable qualitative, market, and demographic information that can help you design an advertising schedule.

Assess Credible Messengers for Reaching Your Target Audience(s)

Identifying the most popular and credible messengers to communicate your message is a key final step in the process. Keep in mind that some messengers may be very popular with the target audience, but they may not be relevant spokespersons for the issue. Consider the risks of using different types of messengers when selecting the most appropriate spokesperson. For example, while a local entertainer may be popular with your target audience, his/her past or future behavior may affect the message he/she delivers regarding your issue.

Key questions to identify messengers include:

| KEY QUESTIONS | POSSIBLE DATA SOURCES |
|---|---|
| Who are the primary public figures who reach and influence your target audience(s) (e.g., media figures, entertainers, sports figures, political leaders, religious leaders)? | X Focus groups X Content analysis of media coverage and advertising X Advertising/public relations agencies X Commercial surveys |
| Who are the most credible spokespersons and role models around issues of transportation/air quality? | X Focus groups X Surveys with the target audience(s) |
| Are there other popular community figures, such as teachers, employers, professionals? | X Focus groups X Surveys with the target audience(s) |
| Who are the peer and opinion leaders among your target audience(s) (e.g., friends, family members)? | X Focus groups |

Taking the time to understand your audience(s) and identify relevant channels and messengers will provide you with a strong foundation that you can use to develop a successful strategic communications plan for your program.

**Focus Group Participant
Recruitment Screener**

TRANSPORTATION/AIR QUALITY FOCUS GROUP SCREENER - Adult Drivers

Hello. This is _____ of _____, an independent marketing research firm. We are holding discussions about a variety of transportation and air quality issues. I would like to ask you some questions to see if you qualify to participate in one of the discussion groups. The groups will be held on (DATE/TIME) and will last approximately two hours. Refreshments will be served and you will receive \$ ____ for your participation.

1. Have you or a member of your immediate family ever worked in advertising or marketing research?
☐ Yes - *THANK AND TERMINATE*
☐ No
2. Have you participated in a focus group within the last six months?
☐ Yes - *THANK AND TERMINATE*
☐ No
3. Do you work for either a government agency or business that deals with transportation or the environment?
☐ Yes - *THANK AND TERMINATE*
☐ No
4. Are you a licensed driver?
☐ Yes
☐ No - *THANK AND TERMINATE*
5. Please stop me when I mention the group that includes your age:
☐ Under 18 - *THANK AND TERMINATE*
☐ 18 - 24
☐ 25 - 35
☐ 35 - 44
☐ 45 - 54
☐ 55 - 64
☐ 65 or older
6. How many miles do you drive during the average week or year?
☐ 200+ miles a week/10,000+ miles a year
☐ Less than above - *THANK AND TERMINATE*
7. Are you employed outside of the home for more than 30 hours a week?
☐ Yes
☐ No - *RECRUIT NO MORE THAN 2 FOR EACH GROUP*
8. How do you usually commute to work?
☐ Car
☐ Other - *RECRUIT NO MORE THAN 2 FOR EACH GROUP*

9. Our study has to do with some issues related to our natural environment. Would you please tell me which of the statements best describes how you feel about the environment?

THANK AND TERMINATE IF RESPONDENT AGREES WITH FIRST STATEMENT.

- () I consider myself an environmentalist and think it is important that everyone do what they can do to protect our environment, even if that means doing things that are inconvenient or more costly.

RECRUIT FROM RESPONDENTS WHO AGREE WITH THESE STATEMENTS.

- () I think it is important to take steps to protect the environment, but I don't think it's reasonable to expect people to do things that are inconvenient, time-consuming, or more costly.
- () The environment is somewhat important to me, although I often make decisions based on other factors, such as convenience or cost.

TERMINATE IF RESPONDENT AGREES WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT.

- () I don't feel the condition of the environment warrants as much attention as some other people think. Besides, there are too many other important things for me to think about.

10. What is the last grade of school or college you completed?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| () Less than high school | () College graduate |
| () High school graduate or less | () Graduate study or more |
| () Some college | |

I would like to invite you to take part in a discussion group with other people who live in this area. The session is informal and all you will be asked to do is give your opinions. The discussion will last about two hours and we will give you \$XX.XX for attending. The discussion will be held on _____.

Group 1: () 6:00 pm - A light dinner of deli sandwiches and refreshments will be provided.

Group 2: () 8:00 pm - Snacks and refreshments will be provided.

GIVE RESPONDENT DIRECTIONS TO FACILITY. We will call you the day before to remind you about this discussion. We will be counting on your attendance since we will only be inviting 10 people. May I please get your:

Name: _____

Telephone: (home) _____ (work) _____

Moderators Guide

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

MODERATOR'S GUIDE

Audience: Driving Public

I. Opening remarks

A. What we're going to do in this group:

1. Legitimate research - how this research is used
2. No selling
3. No changing of minds
4. No forcing of consensus

B. How we'll conduct the group:

1. Informal conversation
2. The role of the moderator
3. No right or wrong answers
4. Please be frank
5. Agree to disagree
6. Everyone has a right to their opinion

C. Introductions:

1. How long in this area?
2. Occupation if employed outside the home
3. Family composition
4. Things your family likes to do together.

II. When you think about issues that affect the quality of life in the region, what comes to mind?

[THIS IS A QUICK PROBE TO SEE WHETHER THE ENVIRONMENT COMES UP AS A PRESSING ISSUE.]

A. What would you say are the most important issues facing you?

B. What kinds of things do you think individuals living in the area can do to improve the quality of life?

1. What kinds of things do you think you as an individual can do to improve the quality of life?
2. When I say “quality of life,” what does this idea mean to you?

[BASED ON OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE, THE FOLLOWING MAY BE USED TO PROBE DEEPER INTO THIS ISSUE.]

- a. What do you care about?
 - b. What are the things in life that really matter to you?
 - c. If you could have any more of any one thing in life, what would it be?
3. How important would you say it is that attention be given immediately to the protection of the environment in this region?
 - a. Are there elements of the “environment” in the area that need protection?

C. I’m going to show you some ads that you might see or hear in the newspaper or magazines. As I show each, I’d like you to tell me:

1. What point do you think they are trying to make with this ad?
2. What do they want you to do (as a result of seeing this)?
3. Who do you think they want to see this?
4. Do you feel like you are part of this “target audience?” Why/Why not?
5. Is what this says believable? Why/Why not?
6. Do you agree with what it says? Why/Why not?
7. Where would you expect an ad like this to come from?
 - a. What would you think if it came from the federal government?
 - b. What would you think if it came from your state government?
 - c. What would you think if it came from your city government?
 - d. Does it mean more if it comes from a national organization or a local organization, or vice versa?
 - e. How about if it came from a nonprofit organization interested in the environment?
 - f. What about a group of organizations, including the local government, local transportation organizations, and groups interested in the environment?
8. Which of these sources would be most credible delivering the messages I have been describing?

MODERATOR WILL PRESENT A SELECTION OF ADS. GROUP MEMBERS WILL ADDRESS EACH AD IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS. THERE WILL BE EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF EACH, AND THEIR

IMPRESSIONS OF WHICH MESSAGE IS MOST EFFECTIVE IN INFLUENCING THEIR ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR. BY END OF DISCUSSION THEY WILL HAVE DETERMINED WHICH ADS APPEAR TO BE MOST CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGY OF THE CAMPAIGN AND WHICH MESSENGER(S) APPEARS TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE.

- D. [FALSE CLOSE]
- E. Thanks and closing

#

Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

1. Age: _____
2. Sex: ☐ male ☐ female
3. Occupation: _____
4. Education Level: ☐ some high school ☐ some college
☐ high school grad ☐ college grad or more
☐ GED
5. How would you describe the area where you live? ☐ urban ☐ suburban ☐ rural
6. What were the primary factors in your decision to live in this area? (check all that apply)
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> cost of housing | <input type="checkbox"/> access to mass transit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> schools | <input type="checkbox"/> access to stores |
| <input type="checkbox"/> access to main roads | <input type="checkbox"/> closeness to work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other: | |
7. Number of members in your household: ☐ 1-2 ☐ 5-6
☐ 3-4 ☐ 6+
- Number of children: _____ List ages: _____
8. How long is your daily commute? **miles (round-trip)** **time (minutes)**
- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 | <input type="checkbox"/> <15 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5+ -10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16-30 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10+ -20 | <input type="checkbox"/> 31-60 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20+ -30 | <input type="checkbox"/> 60+ minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30+ | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A - don't work outside home |
9. Do others in your household also commute? ☐ yes ☐ no
- if **yes**, how long is their commute? **miles (round-trip)** **time (minutes)**
- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 | <input type="checkbox"/> <15 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5+ -10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16-30 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10+ -20 | <input type="checkbox"/> 31-60 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20+ -30 | <input type="checkbox"/> 60+ minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30+ | |
- 10a. How do you usually get to and from work? ☐ drive your own car ☐ walk
☐ ride a bus ☐ bike
☐ carpool ☐ other:

10b. How would you categorize your non-work related travel?

- ☐ errands ☐ combine errands into one trip ☐ go as you need to
☐ leisure activities
☐ other:

10c. How do you travel during this time?

- ☐ drive your own car
☐ combination of car/public transit
☐ ride a bus
☐ walk
☐ other:

11. What are your transportation options for commuting to work? Please check all that apply, and rate each option as **GOOD**, **FAIR**, or **POOR**.

DRIVE ALONE

Available: ☐ yes ☐ no

| | <u>GOOD</u> | <u>FAIR</u> | <u>POOR</u> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| accessibility | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| convenience of schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| cost | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| safety | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| pleasant travel environment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

CARPOOL/VANPOOL

Available: ☐ yes ☐ no

| | <u>GOOD</u> | <u>FAIR</u> | <u>POOR</u> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| accessibility | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| convenience of schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| cost | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| safety | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| pleasant travel environment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

BUS/OTHER PUBLIC TRANSIT

Available: ☐ yes ☐ no

| | <u>GOOD</u> | <u>FAIR</u> | <u>POOR</u> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| accessibility | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| convenience of schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| cost | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| safety | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| pleasant travel environment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

WALK

Available:

☐ yes☐ noGOODFAIRPOOR

accessibility
convenience of schedule
cost
safety
pleasant travel environment

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐**BICYCLE**

Available:

☐ yes☐ noGOODFAIRPOOR

accessibility
convenience of schedule
cost
safety
pleasant travel environment

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐**OTHER, PLEASE EXPLAIN:**GOODFAIRPOOR

accessibility
convenience of schedule
cost
safety
pleasant travel environment

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

12. Would you change/keep anything about your commute?

